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ABSTRACT

Every immigrant has a right to literacy in his native language, but native language literacy alone does not guarantee success. The objective of a program begun in the 1970s in New York City was to develop biliteracy in immigrants so they could start and manage small businesses in the community. Despite a lack of political protection for the community, and despite a gentrification policy and an economic downturn, program participants were motivated to further develop their skills, and they turned to public higher education institutions to fulfill their aspirations. The City University of New York was unsuccessful in establishing a college for this population, but the State University of New York backed the creation of a non-campus, bilingual, biliterate neighborhood college, the Lower East Side Bilingual Unit. In this environment, one-to-one contact with mentors and tutors and fair evaluation of prior knowledge contribute to immigrant student success. Using the student's source of basic needs and aspirations, the wish to succeed in business, as core content facilitates effective learning of English as a Second Language. Development of biliteracy requires development of the bilingual brain, which in turn requires a dialogue of cultures and languages based on mutual respect. True biliteracy needs a true bicultural environment. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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BILITERATE IMMIGRANTS IN A COMMUNITY SETTING

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In the last thirty years, literacy has become one of the most controversial issues in educational theory and practice. As Jack Goody and Ian Watt had already written in 1963, "It may be that new modes of communicating sight and sound without any limit of time or place will lead to a new kind of culture, less inward and individualistic than literate culture."[1] The most ardent question is: What is literacy in a post-literate society? Almost thirty years later, we know, I think, that we're no longer living in the "Guttenberg Galaxy." But the need for comprehensive literacy combined with critical reading skills is more urgent than ever. If the question of literacy is so difficult, why do we at this conference move a step further in the realm of difficulties and confront the problem of biliteracy? The answer is simple: We have no alternative.

Two facts are pervasive in the world today: massive immigration and the struggle for human rights. Oscar Handlin developed a new paradigm forty years ago to explain the historical phenomenon of immigration: THE UPROOTED.[2] Alienation is organically linked to uprootlessness; it is the lack of power to control one's life and work. Since the time he wrote, immigration has become even more massive and more diverse. The reality in the background of this approach was the acceptance of the first generation of immigrants as a "lost generation" from the point of view of full participation in the cultural, artistic, and political life of the new country. "First Generation Immigrants Go to College" is <u>not</u> a chapter in Handlin's book; instead, "The Shock of Alienation" is a central chapter in the book. As recently as 1983 Tove Skutnabb-Kangas wrote that immigrant countries "have produced what has been called a lost generation, a generation of young people entirely disabled for life . . . we are forcing

part of the immigrant youth to become a new type of bitter, physically violent lumpen proletariat". 3

IMMIGRATION AND BILITERACY

I came to the United States in September of 1970. The question that had moved me to come and has continued to keep me here is, Can this paradigm be changed? It was not possible to find a theoretical solution to such a problem. But it became possible to try to find an alternative. It became crystal clear that "biliteracy" would have to be central to such an alternative. Sociology and linguistics helped to clarify the understanding of the situation. There were massive numbers of young immigrants, new arrivals in their late teens and early twenties. It was obvious that the majority of them were coming with only a few years of primary education--five to seven on average. But a growing number were young people who had several years of secondary education or even some college. On the other hand, the linguistic research after the mid-Fifties had made significant advances in understanding the psychological and sociological roles of the first language in affirming human identity and avoiding crippling alienation and uprootedness.4 If this was so, the early Seventies seemed a ripe time to try to make biliteracy part of the North American cultural and political landscape. "We found strong evidence to suggest that bilinguals are better able than monolinguals to deal with abstract aspects of language, that there is a greater cognitive flexibility on the part of bilinguals . . .we prefer to speak of different cognitive styles instead of advantages."[5]

Research and practice made it increasingly evident that civil rights and human rights for immigrants cannot be fully realized without

biliteracy. Immigrants bring their roots and their culture with them. Language is an essential dimension of culture. To give up their roots and culture is a human impossibility. To try is to do serious damage to one's basic identity and to become humanly crippled with self-alienation. It is therefore a way of giving up basic human rights. To say that the only way to become an adequate speaker of a second language is to give up one's own language is the result of a fallacious mechanical conception of human life; it is also a contradiction. First generation adult immigrants cannot become linguistically and culturally fluent using only a second language.

Results of research published by Jim Cummins since the early Eighties have theoretically reinforced a conviction that was part of my praxis back in the early Seventies.[6] The Bilingual Act of 1968 was, by 1971, already bearing fruit in many states. The struggle for literacy in the mother language became easier with the possibility of taking the High School Equivalency test in only the mother language; tests have been given in Spanish and French since 1965. People could get a diploma written in English without reference to the language in which it was taken. The fact that this great advancement has been partially revoked in the late Eighties shows that the progress of human rights does not follow a lineal sequence of progress:a sixth component in English is now part of the Spanish exam.

The obtaining of such a diploma was an extremely important practical achievement and an affirmative action on human rights. In preparing themselves for this test in their own language, hundreds of thousands of immigrants became fully literate in their own language in a foreign country, when they had already given up on reaching this goal. This implementation of literacy became even more meaningful in the case of Spanish literacy because of the richness of fiction, historical writing and poetry

developed in Latin America during the second part of this century. To be able to start this work counting on such books as Pedro Paramo, Cien Años de Soledad. Pedagogia del Oprimido, Venas Abiertas de America Latina, Piedras de Sol, and Residencia en La Tierra made the task more urgent and promising for teacher and student alike.

If there is a constant to immigration anywhere, anytime, it is the need to develop associations, and, if possible, communities in the new country. No country which accepts immigrants has eve openly denied the right to the satisfaction of this basic human social need. It is in these communities that literacy in the mother language makes full sense. It has a basic social meaning. A bodega of literate participants is a much better economic institution than a bodega of illiterate consumers. Besides being a food store, a bodega is a place for socializing. The concept of a social context of literacy developed by Szwed and others and the concept of embeddedness developed by linguistics makes full sense in this situation.7

I defend the right to literacy in the mother language in any situation: in the country of origin and in the country of migration. But its value must not be exaggerated. D. Cressy, a famous researcher in the field of historical literacy, has concluded that literacy can unlock many doors but cannot secure admission.8 The lack of success for many highly literate people is all too common.

If literacy could secure the doors of success, then very few people would be illiterate. But there are many kinds of success, and life is more than success. Literacy is personal fulfillment through critical understanding. It is more essential to critical understanding than success.

BILITERACY AS ORIENTATION

Modern semiology has adequately explained the centrality of signs in human life and, therefore, in language.9 Signs are central because orientation is basic to human life: the need for orientation in the world has a lot to do with the transition from sense images to thought, language and writing. If the sign implies Derrida's "deferred presence," then the sign is orientation. Paolo Freire has correctly stated that reading and writing must be seen in light of one's orientation in the world.10 If orientation is an essential human need at all times, in every situation, then the case of immigration is especially acute. If an immigrant has an original sense of orientation that is weak, or loses it with the process of migration, then orientation becomes further complicated, if not impossible. Literacy in the mother language means further development and strengthening of the primary sense of orientation as the basis for the secondary sense of orientation in the new country. For example, it would be very difficult to understand a map without the key; and definitions don't make full sense without pointers.

A famous Galician poet, Celso Emilio Ferreiro, has written a book on immigration. He calls it Viaxe O Pais dos Ananos (Traveling to the Land of the Dwarfs). He sees normal people becoming dwarfs as a consequence of rootlessness and as a consequence of illiteracy in the mother language. Rootlessness is very inhuman for the uprooted: it can also be very bad for the host country. I would tell the promoters of "English Only," for the sake of survival and well being of the country, respect the U.S. Constitution and let languages flourish in the land. The Constitution does not establish English or any language as official. Furthermore, the First

Ammendment protects free speech which is not possible with English only for those whose primary language is something other than English.

Furthermore, the English Only movement is a clear violation of the Charter of Paris, signed by the United States: "We affirm that, without discrimination, every individual has the right to freedom of expression." If the full use of a primary language is denied to individuals and groups, the freedom of expression as a right is seriously diminished. In a recent book, Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut state the obvious: "Unlike several European nations, which are tolerant of linguistic diversity, in the United States the acquisition of non-accented English and the dropping of foreign languages represent the litmus test of Americanization . . . . The American experience is remarkable for its near mass extinction of non-English languages."[11] Recent proof of this fact is the suppression of the Black vernacular play "Mule Bone" since the late 1920's.

An important symposium on literacy was held at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, in October, 1982. "Awakening to Literacy" stressed the intimate relationship between literacy and culture: "Literacy events are embedded in an environment of family life, play, etc."[12] Their working definition of culture as "shared patterns of behavior shared by a group of people" needs further explanation. A group of people share a world view to which particular concepts of space, time, origins and aspirations are essential. Immigrants carry all of these elements within themselves. A further understanding of their own culture is a unique opportunity of an immigrant situation. The full use of the primary language is necessary to the success of such an effort at human development. Many

immigrants have explored and understood their own cultures in New York in a way they could not have in their villages of origin.

"It is through situation dependent ambient print that many find their way into literacy and their meaningful encounters with it," Frank Smith said in the Victoria Symposium. This situation dependency is further confirmed by the extensive research of Jack Goody. He concludes that "literacy is developed in intimate association with the community."[13] Text requires context. An average community of immigrant workers, recent arrivals, is formed by people who, in the majority, had limited school or no school at all in their places of origin. To develop programs that facilitate full literacy in the mother language up to the twelfth grade is a great educational accomplishment; its outcomes can only be positive. The intensive practice in many places during the Seventies proves this point.

Once people are fully literate in their primary language, to become biliterate is central to their aspirations as immigrants. The fact of the matter is that there are not immigrants who do not want to learn the language of the country where they came to live and work. What many discover is that it is extremely difficult or impossible to learn a new language at a certain age due to a lack of adequate linguistic background in the primary language or to lack of sufficient length of residence. One of the most difficult components of my experience in this field has been to convince immigrants that it is better for them to first become fully literate in their primary language, and that the learning of the second language would be quicker and more successful afterwards.

Of course, biliteracy does not mean to be literate in one language first, and later to be exclusively literate in another language. It means to be literate in two languages at the same time. Similarly, bilingual

education does not mean to study first only in one language, and later only in another language. Bilingual education means to learn in two languages at the same time in a balanced way. The infamous concept of transitional bilingual education is not only a logical contradiction but a sad chapter in the history of education in the United States. The definition of bilingualism as lack of English ability is a travesty.

BILITERACY AS EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

It is very important to be realistic and accept the fact that to learn a foreign language, especially if it does not belong to the same linguistic stock, is one of the most difficult things in life. To become totally fluent in a second language is impossible for adult immigrants. Can you imagine somebody who emigrated at the age of thirty, made an extraordinary and successful effort at studying the language and a full career in political sciences, and who twenty five years later wants to become governor of a State. Would his or her accent be an asset to being a successful candidate? If the person has all the qualifications, and the opportunity is denied because of an unsurmountable thick accent, a serious question of human rights arises.

In my experience in the early Seventies, this was not the aspiration of recent immigrants, but, it was a serious hypothetical consideration. Actually, learners and teachers alike settled for much less. In 1971, we founded a program within the social-historical context of the Human Potential movement. For six years we operated solely from the apartments of our learners and a small loft in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. The learners consisted of recent immigrants, mostly Dominicans. The majority were in their early twenties and slightly more than half were women.

Our goal was to develop biliterate immigrants who could start and manage small businesses in the community because this was the desire of many of the participants. They had their high school diplomas; many them by passing the GED examination. Also, they had taken basic ESL. We initiated small business classes in their primary language and intensive second language classes with the same content as classes in primary language. This became the key to success. The experience, in this particular case, fully confirms the statement of Esperanza Gonzalez from the Philippines: "Learning two languages is worth the investment of time and effort only if the learner is able to use both for life needs."[14] Language experience is a prerequisite for adequate learning.

Scores of immigrants started their own businesses in their community in New York. Being bilingual and bilaterate are variables without which they could never have become what they are. Biliteracy became conditional to economic success. Since the products are named in two languages and accounting has to be done in the second language, the need of both literacies is truly relational and functional in this case. The potential of this approach became big in the mid-Seventies. But the lack of political protection of the communities greatly reduced this potential; the policy of gentrification encouraged people from outside the community to buy key businesses and property. Nineteen seventy-six was the first year of a big graduating class of small business learners. It was also the year of New York's major economic crisis. Gentrification was promoted as the way out of the crisis. For these immigrants, in their old neighborhoods, this meant dislocation, destruction of their communities and the end of their opportunities for establishing many small businesses. Despite these

hardships and the improbabilities of success in this political-economic climate, some succeeded in their relocated environments.

Because people had became biliterate in the process of being trained for small business, data entry and bookkeeping, the urge to further develop their biliteracy skills was powerful. The social and economic conditions were extreme, but they had their GEDs and they looked to further education as to overcome the crisis and fulfill their aspirations.

The open admissions policy of public universities at the end of the Sixties opened many doors but did not guarantee successful exit. Drop out rates of up to eighty percent by 1976 proved that the need for something much more radical was urgent. One key moment of dropping out happens when students have to use the second language only at the moment of starting advanced courses of study. The answer to the aspirations of immigrants already functionally biliterate, who want to greatly increase the relational and functional aspects of biliteracy, is the neighborhood college. Obviously it cannot be a private college because of the costs. Only as part of a public university can a neighborhood college be fair and make full sense. In my case, it has been a sad irony that the efforts to have a Neighborhood College as part of the City University of New York became fruitless after many years of working with several so-called community colleges and two senior colleges in their systems. It has been the State University of New York which had the will and the institutional resources to back the creation of a bilingual, biliterate neighborhood college. It prerequires a non-campus approach similar to the Open University in Europe, and the centers and units of Empire State College, a non-campus college of the State University of New York.

One of the primary objectives of the experiment on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1976 was to reverse the high drop out rate: to people in the community, mostly recent arrivals from other countries, we made the commitment to graduate at least eighty percent of entering students. It was only a question of honesty and decency to make this commitment.

Finally, it has become possible to make real the contents of a chapter that Oscar Handlin could not have written in 1951: First Generation Immigrants go to college and they graduate. It is an extraordinary challenge: the very concept of college studies is based on the idea that students' priority is just to go to college. In the case of immigrants, full-time exhausting jobs have the priority over college studies. The feat becomes even more challenging because New York State TAP scholarships require attending college on a full-time basis.

In the neighborhood college, one-to-one contact with mentors and tutors at the convenience of the student greatly facilitates the process. The fair evaluation of prior knowledge is also extremely helpful to adult students in general, and to immigrants in particular. Immigrants have developed prior knowledge in their primary language; it gets evaluated in the second language. This is biliteracy at its fullest potential.

Here is how biliteracy, and bilingual learning in general, function in the neighborhood college. At the level of Input-listening and Input-reading comprehension, second language is used as much as seventy to eighty percent of the time. At the level of Output-speaking and Output-writing, first and second languages are used at equal levels most of the time. The rationale for this practice is reinforced by the conclusions of brain research: "We have seen evidence to support the theory that systems for language perception are to some degree independent . .. there is also a

strong probability that the bilingual builds a unitary system for perception and maintains two separate output systems."[15]

In subjects that require extensive narratives, many students feel threatened by study groups conducted only in the second language. This is the case with United States History, History of Education, Sociology of Education, Introduction to Business and Critical Reading Skills. The availability of a professor-mentor to discuss the topics in the first language is not only the affirmation of a human right, but the key to success in these situations. It lowers the affective filter, to use Steven Krashen's well known principle.

Toward the end of the Seventies, a new wave of urban immigration changed the factors of the social and educational equation in New York City. Among the most significant changes was the shift of median education from 5 to 7 years of school to 10 to 12 years. This created a new demand and a new opportunity for higher education of recent immigrants. Gloria M. is a case in point. She had a high school diploma from a vocational school in a large South American city. She also had a diploma in speech therapy from an institute in Mexico City. For seven years she had developed and directed a clinic in her native city. Forced into exile for political reasons, she ended up in New York City. She spent her first year learning English. Afterwards she presented her credentials to the admissions office of a traditional public four-year college in the City. They told her that the maximum number of credits she could be awarded based on her case would be thirty. This caused her to give up the hope of obtaining a college degree in the United States. Instead, she settled for a job in a travel agency.

By word of mouth she learned about the Lower East Side Bilingual Unit.

In her initial interview, she was told about the possibility of getting ninety-six credits based on an evaluation of her prior learning. This evaluation took a lot of hard work on her part over six months; and was also aided by the evaluation of a professional international organization that the college accepted. Finally, she was awarded the ninety-six credits and six months after that completed her degree. Next, she passed the licensing exam and became a leading bi-lingual speech therapist in the New York City Public School system. English was the most challenging thing for her.

College English is much more difficult for recent immigrants than Street English. From the very beginning of the experiment of the Neighborhood College, I developed a bridge course called "College English for Immigrants." It became central to the curriculum of study in pursuit of biliteracy at the college level. The first basis of this was the transference of linguistical abilities developed the first language. The acquisition of adequate academic vocabulary in English was the focus of this course of study. "In the case of scientific thinking, the primary role is played by initial verbal definition which, being applied systematically, gradually comes down to concrete phenomena."16

The most basic condition for effective and proficient learning of a second language is to overcome its strangeness, its apparent nonsense. One big leap forward is the use of basic needs and basic aspirations as the core content. To study Business in the first language and use the content learned to further the knowledge of the second language is a sure road to success when success in business is a high aspiration, as I said earlier. College-level English is developed at a higher level of abstraction than

any other. Abstraction is a very difficult mental effort in the first language, it is many times more difficult in a foreign language.

I am glad to say here that it was a North American philosopher, C. S. Pierce, who enlightened my way in the search for meaningful levels of abstraction. His famous triad of feeling, sensing, and forming abstract concepts became the basis for developing College English for Immigrants. It is philosophically fascinating how this man, who is the founder of pragmatism, stressed so much that language not only has a function of pragmatic indexing, but also intralinguistic and metapragmatic functions.[17] There is no adequate college English as either first or second language without development of all these functions. The intralinguistic function implies an acquaintance with the language which has to be synchronic and diachronic at the same time. In the case of a second language it requires the translation of symbols into another set of symbols. The translation must take place within the same language and its culture; and from one language and culture into another.

If the metapragmatic function requires "delving into an utterance to extract its underlying proposition," how can people do it in a foreign language if they cannot do it in their first language? Or, what if their primary language restricted codes never became expanded codes? It is a very bad thing to be bicultural without being bilingual and biliterate. L. Vygotsky's "Experimental Study of the Development of Concepts," brought great theoretical clarification in this field. "A word devoid of thought is a dead thing and a thought unembodied in words remains a shadow."[18] This statement is highly relevant to the immigrant situation.

BILITERATE EVALUATION OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

It is in this highly theoretical context that I would like to discuss the theory and practice of biliterate evaluation of prior knowledge as it is applied to immigrants in the Neighborhood College, as it exists in the Lower East Side Bilingual Unit of SUNY's Empire State College. I am aware of the objections that philosophers of education like Barry P. Bright and Ronald W. K. Patterson have against this and similar approaches. Bright wrote recently about "epistemological vandalism" and Patterson questioned the legitimacy of this altogether.[19] The response to the challenge of these distant philosophers is a constant epistemological vigilance that should guarantee accuracy and cohesiveness in adult education in general and evaluation of prior learning in particular.

We must keep in mind that the level of English required for graduation is difficult for native speakers of the language. It is almost impossible for recent immigrants. One of the most unfair situations that I have witnessed is the case of immigrants who go to traditional colleges; they study between four and seven years, accumulating between one hundred twenty five and one hundred forty credits, but their hopes of graduation go up in smoke after years of trying to pass the exit exam which for them is a non-exit exam. This is a blatant case of "academic colonialism", to use Arce's expression.[20] It is also a gross violation of human rights. To reach the advanced level of college composition is a difficult and threatening objective for recent immigrants, even without the exit exam which is required by the senior colleges of the City University of New York in order to graduate.

As I have already stated, the evaluation of prior knowledge in the first language requires the full use of the second language. Right now, Empire State College, State University of New York accepts a high school diploma in any foreign language as a guarantee of sixteen college credits in a foreign language toward the degree. If the person does not have a diploma in the native language, he or she can be tested and be granted the credits upon passing a standardized test. This fact creates in the mind of the immigrant a sense of fairness and encouragement of quickly becoming competent in the second language. The need to know, as explained by such different educators as Freire and Knowles, becomes highly productive and liberating in this case. Although evaluation of prior knowledge is an innovation in the history of education, and has been practiced for many years, I did not know of an adequate theoretical rationale for it. This is ironic in the United States because it was precisely C. S. Pierce who laid the ground work for such a rationale one hundred years ago. His concept of abduction and his renewed acceptance of Kant's philosophy is a sound basis for this rationale: not experience as such but experience through analysis leads to formal knowledge.[21] One of Peirce's theorems is "every phenomenal object is a possible text."

When immigrants starting in the Neighborhood College grasp the potential of this process, their eagerness to develop academic English becomes fully acted upon. The thrill of taking part in such a process that leads them to see the value of their prior knowledge formulated in another language has kept me involved in this experiment on the Lower East Side for twenty years, in spite of the unpleasant surrounding conditions. Almost all graduates from the Bilingual Unit go on to get graduate degrees, mostly in bilingual education and literary studies.

THE BILINGUAL BRAIN

The development of biliteracy requires the development of a bilingual brain. A bilingual brain is still one brain, not two brains--and for the time being, the Japanese have not developed a second brain to be carried in the pockets of immigrants.

Since U. Weinrich wrote Languages in Contact, almost forty years ago, great progress has been made toward understanding the compounding, coordinating and balancing of two languages in the brain. Theory and practice have provided evidence showing that two languages developed in the same brain have one underlying conceptual and linguistic system.[22] The question of course is not only how to become proficient in two languages, but how to do it avoiding mental confusion and developing clarifying processes. This has been the main objective of College English for Immigrants since 1971. One particular problem that Hispanics find is the historical nature of the English language. The divorce between spoken and written language creates serious problems for people who speak and write a phonic language as their primary language. The fact that Street English is predominantly of Germanic origin and academic English is mostly of Latin and Greek origin can easily be a source of confusion for people speaking a Latin language. An expression like "It's raining cats and dogs" is so strange and so difficult for Hispanics that it requires hard learning, and probably can never be fully understood. And, yet, a sentence like "Important dictionaries codify significant information" looks so familiar that Hispanics have trouble accepting that it is not some dialect of Spanish. Expressions like "alumni association," "verb tense," "attending college" sound very familiar because the expressions also exist in Spanish, but the meaning is very different in both languages. To avoid permanent confusion it is essential to develop a

clarifying process from the beginning. The difficulty of becoming monoliterate for many native speakers of English should be a source of serious thinking to understand that the difficulty is much greater for immigrants. For years I thought that the confusion of the by- of bylaws with the by- of bypass, the -mare of nightmare with the mare, U.S. policy with insurance policy, and to assume that the proximity of "concept" to "concepto" is repeated in "day" and "dia," was a mistake made only by foreigners, speakers of English as a second language. Tests conducted by me, including tests of native speakers of English, showed that native speakers can easily make the same mistakes. I would propose the hypothesis that English is more difficult than other European languages because of historical events that have affected the language in ways other languages have not been affected. Once I gave a speech on Language and Conquest. Somebody in the audience objected, saying that conquerors cannot shoot languages. "That is correct," said I, "but they can shoot key speakers of the languages."

If "literacy is a pattern of discourse that operates in a social context according to certain culture-specific conventions"[23], then biliteracy operates in a double social and cultural context of conventions. To develop a coherent bilingual brain, a dialogue of cultures and languages, based on mutual respect, is essential. This additive, not subtractive, conception of biliteracy gives fuller sense to reading "as an opportunity that texts provide to penetrate new worlds".[24] Sometimes I think the bilingual brain of immigrants is overloaded and overwhelmed. If reading habits are defined as scanning habits, how much can a human being, especially an immigrant worker, discover? Serious research has led to the conclusion that "L2 CALP is more dependent on L1 CALP than on L2 BICS".[25] If this conclusion becomes part of our practice, great progress can be made

toward meaningful and successful biliteracy. Of course, true biliteracy does not make sense without true bicultural environments. Biliteracy implies also good metalinguistic awareness: "How does one know when one truly knows" is a very relevant question for biliterates.

CONCLUSION

After twenty years I am keenly aware of the impossibility of moving beyond small oases, which are in fact big ghettoes of internal exile, in the development of true biliteracy. I still ask myself often: has the Civil Rights movement really created a radical departure from the traditional attitude as expressed one hundred years ago by the President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: "These immigrants are beaten men from beaten races, representing the worst failures in the struggle for existence"[26]

The more I try to understand the Eighties and its bestsellers like Cultural Literacy and The Closing of the American Mind, the more I am convinced that such a radical departure has not occurred. R. Reich's book Tales of a New America should be read in this context, too. It portrays a country whose controlling ideology of liberalism is unable to transcend its Nineteenth century traditions.27

Structural changes will be required to make Biliteracy and Biliterate Neighborhood College part of the mainsteam educational process. One element of such restructuring should be the policy development that would give priority to development of professionals out of the people who already live in the United States over professionals brought from abroad. Biliteracy requires linguistic structural changes that lead to the acceptance not only of U. S. English but also acceptance of U. S. Spanish. The dialectical

relationship between the languages is best expressed in terms of bilingual brain research: "the learning of a second language may alter patterns of cerebral organization even for the first learned language".28

It is necessary to move beyond cultural colonialism and cultural hegemony to be able to establish structural biliterate institutions.

I would like to finish with a reference to Linguistics. Noam Chomsky has given moving speeches in Central America on literacy competency.[30] Could he do the same thing here in the United States for the benefit of millions of immigrants? It would be an equally dramatic effort. The application of his linguistic theory to U.S. Spanish would show the complexity of the situation and the need to further develop the theory in regard to the learning of a second language in the host country. Speaking Spanish in Nicaragua is very different from speaking Spanish in the United States. His theory does not apply to the complexity of learning a second language and to speaking a native language in a foreign host country of immigrants. The Bilingual Unit has developed a practice in which both languages, Spanish and English, are used in a less simplistic way.

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